

entertained the people of Rome with shows for 100 days, and 50 wild beasts were slaughtered each day; and battles on foot and in boats were represented by hired gladiators. Afterwards the ferocious nature of the Romans was gratified by contests between animals and men, and Christians were chiefly selected for this cruel and generally unequal combat, and, lastly, man was pitted against his fellow. As Cassiodorus properly observes, "the people went with pleasure to see what human nature ought to have looked upon with horror."

There is no doubt that much of the excellence of the antique sculpture was owing to the opportunities afforded to artists of studying the human form in the different games which, as the parties engaged in them were always naked, where thence called gymnastics. Two of the finest works of art which have been preserved to us are the "Fighting Gladiator," discovered at Antium, and the figure still better known under the title of the "Dying Gladiator," ascribed to Ctesibius.

The gladiatorial combats, in which even emperors could sometimes take an active part,* were continued to the year 404, A.D., when a monk, Telemachus, rushing in to separate the combatants, was killed, and the inhuman shows were immediately abolished by the Emperor Honorius.

When it was abandoned for the purposes of display and spectacle, it seems to have been regarded as an exhaustless quarry for building uses, and accordingly we find that, among other palaces, the Farnese palace, erected by the nephew of Pope Paul III., and designed by Michael Angelo, was built almost entirely from the Travertine stone of the Coliseum, and so also was the palace of the Cancellaria, by Bramante. This spoliation was at length checked by Benedict XIV., who erected altars and a cross within the area, consecrating the place to the memory of the martyrs who perished in it during the persecution of the Christians. It is therefore at this moment very much reduced in size, and is, indeed, become

"A ruin—yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half cities, have been rear'd.
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?"
Byron.

Every considerable town had its amphitheatre, in which the inordinate passion of the Roman people for spectacles could be gratified, and important remains are still to be seen of amphitheatres at Pompeii, at Pola, at Puzzuoli, at Capua, at Nîmes, and Verona; this last is of very large dimensions, and in tolerable preservation, especially in the noble ranges of marble seats; and, if I recollect rightly, the Emperor Napoleon held spectacles within its walls. It was probably built either by Domitian or by Trajan.

We must now take some notice of another kind of building, and one peculiar to the Romans, who gratified their love of architectural splendour at the same time that they paid homage to the illustrious deeds of their imperial leaders, in the erection of triumphal arches. Simple at first, consisting only of one arch, with a statue placed above, by degrees these portals of triumph became imposing from their size and magnificence. At Susa we find that a triumphal arch, with the opening, was dedicated to Augustus; at Rimini was one in like manner to him. At Ancona, that in honour of Trajan, a fine example, has only one opening, as had the arch at Vicenza, a simple and elegant design; that at Benevento, to the same emperor, is pronounced by Sir R. C. Hoare to be superior to any in Rome; and it deserves this commendation, and its name of Porta Aurea, and is supposed to be the design of the great Apollodorus, with whom the Emperor Hadrian even condescended to enter the lists as an architect, though met by the rebuke, more honest than courteous,—"Go and paint gourds," when he submitted a design from his own imperial hand.

The Arch of Titus at Rome is highly interesting from its association with the conquest of Jerusalem; it consists, also, of only one opening; it is built of the white marble of Paros, and had four columns on each front, of the Composite order—the first instance of its

application; the sides of the archway were decorated with bas-reliefs, in which are seen representations of the spoils of the Holy Temple, the golden candlestick of seven branches, the table of shewbread, the silver trumpets, the cups (the symbol of the river Jordan), which were actually carried in the procession at the triumphal entry of Titus into Rome, and therefore we can well believe that the Jews will never pass under this arch, which must constantly remind them of the disasters which befel their fatherland.

At Verona there is a triumphal arch, called the Gate of the Lions, of two openings, the only example which occurs to me of this arrangement, and which was said by Palladio to be exceedingly beautiful, whilst of arches of three openings the specimens were very numerous. That of Trajan, in his forum at Rome, was barbarously stripped of much of its decorative sculpture to enrich the triumphal arch of Constantine, for the reason which Gibbon gives—"that it was not possible to find a sculptor in the capital capable of adorning the arch of Constantine," and therefore we see the glaring discrepancy of bas-reliefs commemorating Trajan's defeat of the Dacians placed on a building erected in honour of an emperor who lived so long after him.

The arch of Constantine, like that of Septimius Severus, both at Rome, consists of three arches, that in the centre being considerably wider and higher than those at each side. In these structures we see departures from the simplicity of the Greek school, in the entablature broken over the columns, and in many other respects, as the coupling of columns, and placing them on stilted pedestals, confused and redundant mouldings.

Noble arches of three openings were raised in many of the provinces, one at Orange, called the arch of Marius, a good composition; at Rheims are the remains of one which appears to have three equal openings, not a common arrangement, and in the city—little known, but wonderfully rich in architectural ruins—of Geraza, in Palestine, a splendid arch of triumph of three openings leads to the principal street.

Another specimen of magnificent commemoration is the lofty single column erected to the emperors, a mode of honouring the memory of departed greatness, which has much imitation in modern times, although its architectural propriety is very questionable. The first which we shall notice is the column of Trajan, which rose in majestic dignity from the midst of his forum, the pavement of which is discovered to be 15 feet below the level of the modern streets; this forum was 180 feet wide, and was divided into five avenues by four rows of columns, traces of which have been found, and it is believed that the whole of this forum was under cover, and paved with squares of different marbles, viz., white, veined, giallo antico, and pavonazetto. In the centre stood a noble equestrian statue of Trajan, and on the top of the porticoes were statues and military ornaments, whilst the forum was surrounded by a library, a basilica, and a temple, the triumphal arch being on the fourth side.

Apollodorus designed this column, and we may presume its surrounding accessories, in honour of him whom Byron calls

"The last of those who o'er the whole world
reign'd"

The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd,
But yielded back his conquests."

This superb object is, with its pedestal, of white marble: the latter is 17 feet 11 inches high, and the column is 97 feet 9 inches; the lower diameter is 12 feet 2 inches; the order is Doric; it is fluted a few inches at top and bottom, the rest of the shaft being entirely covered with sculptured figures, which proceed in a spiral direction from the base to the capital, commemorating the exploits of Trajan in his different expeditions: there are but nineteen blocks in the column.

The Antonine column was erected by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in honour of the victories obtained over the Germans, Armenians and Parthians, and dedicated to Antoninus Pius. It stands in the square, which is from it called the Piazza Colonna. In height it is only 6 inches less than that of Trajan, but its diameter is nearly a foot more at the base, whilst the upper diameter is only 1 inch less than the lower diameter of Trajan's pillar, consequently its proportion is not so good.

Including the pedestal, which is loftier than that of the other column, the Antonine pillar is 123 feet. It is also sculptured in a spiral direction, with figures in imitation of the other column. On each of these pillars the summits had statues of the emperors, to whose honour they were raised; these have been superseded by figures of saints: that of Trajan has given way to St. Peter, whilst St. Paul has displaced the Emperor Aurelius, whence the sarcasm of the noble poet,

"And apostolic statues climb

To crush the imperial urn whose ashes sleep:
sublime."

The column of the Emperor Phocas is a simple Corinthian fluted column, about 4 feet in diameter, and its whole height, including the pedestal, is 51 feet.

By way of comparison, we may remark that the single columns erected in England, if not so decorated as those in Rome, yet carry off the palm in respect of size. Nelson's column, at Yarmouth, of the Doric order, is 144 feet high; but the column in London, called the Monument, by Sir Christopher Wren, is 202 feet, or nearly 50 feet higher than the Trajan and Antonine pillar, whilst its diameter is 15 feet, and being fluted throughout, this noble pillar, the finest in the world, has a greater air of simple grandeur than its Roman rivals; and I may here remark that the Duke of York's column, in Waterloo-place, has a very cold and naked appearance, from the absence of flutings in the shaft,—this is the more to be lamented since the situation is so fine.

The edifices we have lately noticed were the offspring of the vanity and love of display of the Romans; but there were others in which, though these qualities may also have had some share in instigating the erection, we must also admit their usefulness—these were their bridges, their aqueducts, and their baths. For the former the arch was a mighty invention, for which we cannot be too grateful to the Romans, who seem to have had as splendid notions in bridge-building as in all other instances. Trajan threw a bridge, designed by Apollodorus, over the Danube, whose piers were 150 high whilst the arches were 170 feet wide, and the bridge itself was 60 feet in width and upwards of a mile in length. This was destroyed by Hadrian, it is asserted, through jealousy of his imperial predecessor.

Quite as wonderful as noble works of art were the aqueducts, of which there were several to supply Rome. The first was built by Appian Cæcus, whose name has been immortalised by the splendid road called, after him, the Appian way—which has been appropriately called "the Queen of Roads."

The second aqueduct was constructed by the censors Papirius Cursor and Curius Dentatus, and the water was brought from a distance of more than 20 miles. The Aqua Julia and the Aqua Virgo were introduced by Agrippa, that munificent benefactor of the Roman people. The purest water was that brought in by the aqueduct of the Prætor Marcus from Subiaco, of which Pliny says, "We may esteem this water for one of the greatest gifts that the gods have bestowed upon our city." To its agreeable coolness, Statius alludes,

"Marsaque rives et frigora duces Marcia."

The aqueduct introduced by Augustus was chiefly for supplying water for the sea-fights which he had formed in the fourteenth region. The last aqueduct was the work of Caligula, and finished by Claudius, after whom it was called.

The eight aqueducts by which Rome was supplied were carried over valleys by tiers of arches, two, three, and four in height, or brought through hills; and in some of the provinces the aqueducts are really astonishing works of construction. The celebrated Pont du Gard, where it crosses that river, is 160 feet high, with arches in three tiers, some of which are 60 feet wide and 70 feet high. That of Nîmes is another famous work, and believed to be the production of Agrippa when he was governor of that city, and even now rich in Roman remains, of which the famous Maison Carrée is a noble instance.

The time would fail to speak of the other works which were raised by Roman wealth and enterprise. Of much that has been described we have now only ruins, so that old Tiber

* As Commodus.

"Regina Virgata."